

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CPR-01

SSC-01 CU-02 /060 W

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P R 061006Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 857

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 9593

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: OBSERVERS SEE NEW CABINET AS OLD FACES WITH MINOR  
POLITICAL IMPACT

REF: (A) SEOUL 9568, (B) SEOUL 9342, (C) SEOUL 6297

SUMMARY. CHANGES TO ROK CABINET ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 4 BRING NO NEW FACES TO KOREAN POLITICAL SCENE. MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE IS DROPPING OF KCIA DIRECTOR SIN CHIK-SU AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY KIM CHAE-KYU, AN APPARENT PAK CONFIDANT. OTHER CHANGES SEEN IN RESPONSE TO PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUAL INCUMBENTS, BUT NOT ALL FACTORS CLEAR AT PRESENT. RESHUFFLE SEEMS TO HAVE NO MAJOR POLICY IMPLICATIONS, BUT CHRISTIAN GROUPS SEE GESTURE TO THEM IN REMOVAL OF MINISTER REUNIFICATION YU WHO HAD CRITICIZED CHRISTIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ON DECEMBER 4, BLUE HOUSE SPOKESMAN YI PANG-HYON ANNOUNCED NAMES OF SIX APPOINTEES TO ROKG CABINET, MOST OF WHOM ARE TRIED AND TRUE, LONGTIME POLITICAL FIGURES. GOVERNMENT IS PLAYING ANNOUNCEMENT IN LOW KEY. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON CHANGES, BLUE HOUSE SPOKESMAN ANSWERED TERSELY "THERE IS NOTHING TO COMMENT  
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ON." SEMI-OFFICIAL KOREA HERALD NEWSPAPER QUOTED "POLITICAL

OBSERVERS" AS CALLING CHANGES "MINOR". PRESS CARTOON SHOWS SIX ELDERLY KOREAN GENTLEMEN QUIETLY EXCHANGING HATS.

2. REPLACEMENT OF KCIA CHIEF DESCRIBED BY KOREA HERALD AS RESULT OF ROKG RENEWED EFFORTS TO COPE EFFECTIVELY WITH "DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD", ABOUT CLOSEST ANY NEWSPAPER HAS DARED GO SO FAR IN CHARACTERIZING WASHINGTON/SEOUL BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS. KNOWLEDGEABLE KOREANS WITH ACCESS TO FOREIGN PRESS CONCEDE THAT CHANGE OF KCIA CHIEF WAS MOST PROBABLY NECESSARY AT THIS POINT IN SEARCH FOR "SCAPEGOAT" IN RUMORED ROKG EFFORT TO SEPARATE ITSELF FROM "UNWISE, OVER-ZEALOUS ACTIONS" OF SOME KOREANS SELLING KOREAN POINT OF VIEW TO AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN.

3. NEW KCIA DIRECTOR KIM CHAE-KYU (50) ONCE SERVED AS KCIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND, A FORMER LIEUTENANT GENERAL, WAS ONCE CHIEF OF ARMY SECURITY COMMAND. PRESS IS EMPHASIZING THAT KIM IS FROM SAME HOME TOWN AS PRESIDENT AND WAS FELLOW MILITARY ACADEMY CLASSMATE. US MILITARY ADVISORS HAVE CALLED KIM AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR BUT POOR MILITARY COMMANDER. WHEN KIM WAS MADE VICE DIRECTOR KCIA IN 1973 EMBASSY REPORT (SEOUL 8509, DEC. 18, 1973) DESCRIBED KIM AS MEMBER OF ANTI-KIM CHONG-PIL FACTION WITHIN ROKG AND A LIEUTENANT OF PAK'S WHO COULD "TAKE OVER KCIA IF IT BECOMES EXPEDIENT TO REVERT TO HARD-LINE KCIA TACTICS." PRESS IS ALSO REPORTING THAT KIM IS A FORMER ALCOHOLIC WHO STOPPED AT INSTIGATION OF HIS DOCTORS. HIS APPOINTMENT PUTS THE KCIA IN HANDS OF A CLOSE PAK ASSOCIATE BUT SUGGESTS NO POLICY CHANGE.

4. FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER WAS AILING, HAS BEEN IN COMA SINCE AN OPERATION IN SEPTEMBER AND HIS REPLACEMENT HAS BEEN EXPECTED FOR SOME TIME (REF B). NEW JUSTICE MINISTER'S MOVE TO EDUCATION PORTFOLIO ALSO CONFORMS TO EARLIER REPORTS OF DISSATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF HIS PERFORMANCE, WHILE HE SHOULD BENEFIT IN NEW POST FROM GOOD REPUTATION AMONG HIS UNIVERSITY COLLEAGUES AND REPORTEDLY POPULARITY WITH HIS STUDENTS.

5. YI YONG-HUI'S DEPARTURE FROM BLUE HOUSE TO REUNIFICATION PORTFOLIO FOLLOWS REPORTS THAT YI LOST SOME DEGREE OF FAVOR IN CONFIDENTIAL

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BLUE HOUSE AS COUNSELOR TO PRESIDENT. YI HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS MORE SCHOLARLY THAN PRACTICAL. REUNIFICATION PORTFOLIO HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS A SINECURE.

6. REASON FOR DEPARTURE OF FORMER REUNIFICATION MINISTER YU SANG-KUN (SANGUINE YOU) IS NOT CLEAR, BUT CHRISTIAN SOURCES HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT THEY BELIEVE HIS REPLACEMENT WAS RESULT OF THEIR OWN EFFORTS TO DISLODGE HIM. YU HAD APPARENTLY WRITTEN

A PAMPHLET WHICH SOME CHRISTIANS HAVE CHARACTERIZED AS SCURRILOUS AND FREEDOM OF MISSION CONFERENCE (NOVEMBER 29-30) SPECIFICALLY ASKED FOR HIS "PUNISHMENT." WHETHER THIS INDEED HAD IMPACT ON PRESIDENT PAK'S DECISION TO REMOVE HIM, MANY CHRISTIANS HERE HAVE CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT IT HAD.

7. NEW MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION SIN HYONG-SIK HELD POSITION OF FIRST MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IN 1975 AND HAS BEEN LONG-TIME CENTRAL DRP FIGURE. NEW MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO CHANG KYONG-SUN HAD BEEN PARTICIPANT IN MILITARY JUNTA GOVERNMENT 1961-3, AND HAS BEEN IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SINCE THAT TIME. HIS FUNCTION IN NEW POSITION IS DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY AT PRESENT.

8. MAIN FACTOR IN CHANGE AT THIS TIME APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DECISION TO REPLACE SHIN AT KCIA, ALTHOUGH OTHER CHANGES AT LEAST IN SOME CASES COINCIDE WITH EARLIER REPORTS OF DISSATISFACTION IN THE BLUE HOUSE WITH SOME MINISTERS' PERFORMANCE, OR IN CASE OF EDUCATION MINISTER, DISABLING ILLNESS. EMBASSY SEES NO REASON TO EXPECT SIGNIFICANT POLICY CHANGES AS RESULT OF THIS RESHUFFLE ALTHOUGH CHURCH COMMENTS ON YU'S DEPARTURE SUGGEST HE MAY HAVE BEEN OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE TO THEIR DESIRES.  
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